



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ALEXANDER POPE, PAINTER OF ANIMALS

No American artist has attained higher distinction as a painter of animals than Alexander Pope. A born sportsman and a lover of brute creation, his art is a direct outgrowth of his affection for the animals he delights to limn. He is not a graduate of the art schools; but self-taught, with the exception of two quarters of instruction in perspective drawing and one quarter with Dr. Rimmer in anatomy, he passed from mercantile life to the studio.

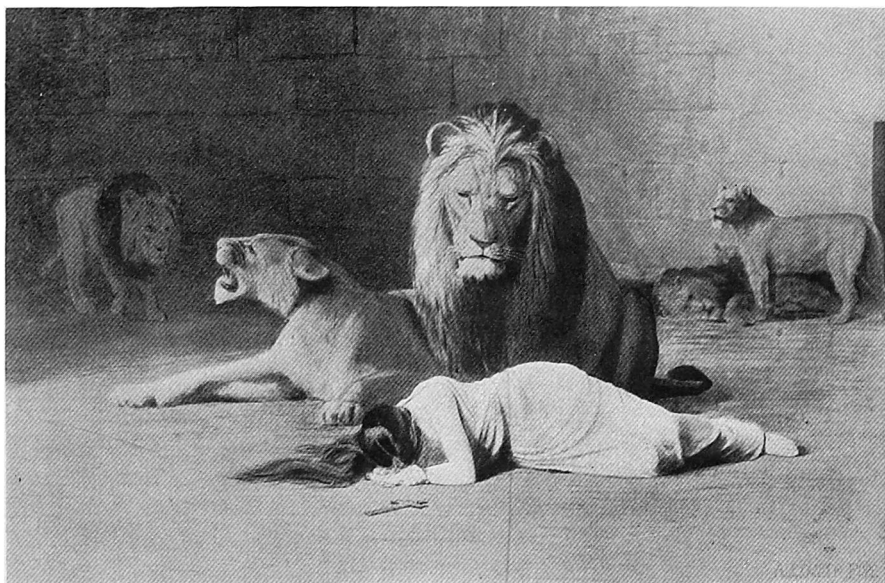
Many of the favored of salons and exhibitions would perhaps deny to him a high rank as a painter, but if the skillful portraitists of human-kind merit the mead of laudation bestowed upon them, certainly Pope is worthy of the highest praise for his animal portraits; if the works of a Landseer and a Bonheur give them justly the rank commonly assigned to them as creative artists, many of Pope's more pretentious pictures entitle him to a higher place in the roll of honor than critics have usually conceded to him.

Pope's paintings are not of the conventional chromo type one is wont to note in animal pictures. They are careful studies, absolutely faithful to his subjects, full of life, spirit, character. The reason is not far to seek. He is a master of animal anatomy and is a good draughtsman, and his lively imagination lends dramatic force to his compositions. Animals evince as sharply defined individual traits as human beings, give just as much evidence of character; and of these traits Pope has been an enthusiastic student. As a consequence, through long practice, he has developed the faculty of investing his animal pictures with much of the charm of character studies.

What is equally noteworthy, Pope has been no seeker after ephemeral notoriety, but has ever been an honest, serious worker on



STUDIO OF ALEXANDER POPE



MARTYRDOM OF ST. EUPHEMIA

By Alexander Pope

legitimate lines. The commissions intrusted to him have not been heralded by press notices, nor, with occasional exceptions, has the fame of his finished works been bruited abroad. He has simply been content patiently to study and work in his Boston studio and to find more glory in self-satisfaction than in notoriety. He has, it is true, painted many of what he calls "characteristic pieces," in which skillful imitation has been more pronounced than creative effort, but primarily he has aimed to be an interpreter and portrayer of animal life, and he has succeeded.

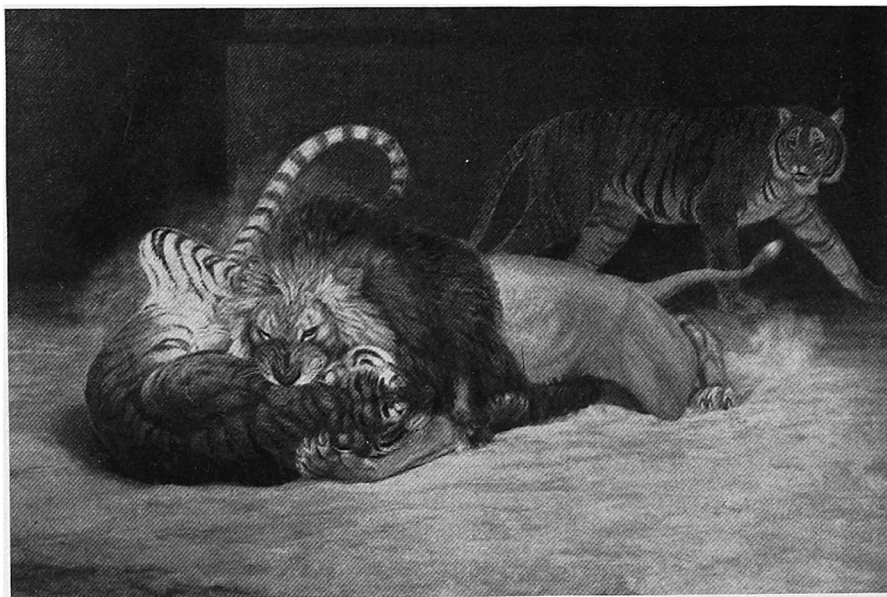
Passing as he did direct from a mercantile to a professional calling without the intervention of the usual years of artistic training, it is not to be supposed that Pope suddenly discovered a natural gift and was genius enough to dispense with the ordinary courses of instruction. He did not awake to find himself famous, nor did he suddenly discover in the routine of his business pursuits that he had exceptional talent for drawing and color-work. His art has been a slow development, and he has worked hard for all that he has attained.

He was born in Boston in 1849, and as a child of seven years of age did creditable work in sketching animals. He showed even in these early efforts a fair grasp of the principles of his art. The uncertainties of professional life, however, were such as to lead his parents to discourage any ambition the boy may have had to follow art as anything but a pleasant avocation, and his entering the lumber

business with his father shortly after graduating from the high school was the result. Several years of uncongenial work followed, and these sufficed to teach young Pope that business was not his forte and to convince him that for him an artist's career was not more hazardous than the pursuits in which he was engaged.

His early years of effort were naturally marked with more or less experimenting. At twenty he was a devotee of wood-carving and modeling, coloring his finished works true to nature. His love of outdoor life and sports naturally led him for a time to select domestic animals and game for his models. His success was marked almost from the outset, and many of his pieces of carving and modeling found abiding resting-places in important collections, one or more of his works, it is interesting to note, finding their way to the dining-hall of the Czar of Russia. The accuracy of his modeling, the delicacy of his touch, the masterful way in which he manipulated his material so as to incorporate in his works those individual animal traits that have since more fully characterized his paintings, gave him a certain vogue with lovers of this form of sculpture and misled him for a time into attempts in which he was less successful.

He was seized with an ambition to become a sculptor of the human form, and made many a study of a fair degree of excellence. Indeed, in 1881 and 1882 he successfully executed a number of busts, but in



STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY
By Alexander Pope

these undertakings he failed to realize his own ideal, and his work soon drifted into the specialty with which his name has since been connected. One of the illustrations accompanying this article, the Kensington lions, executed for Henry Bigelow Williams, of Boston, give evidence of no mean ability in sculpture. But this form of artistic expression was ultimately all but abandoned for what to the

artist was the more congenial and fascinating work of depicting his pets in color.

Up to 1886 the artist's efforts with the palette were limited to the painting of dogs and birds by special commission. In the fall of this year, however, Pope produced his first notable canvas, "Calling Out the Hounds," which was widely exhibited, and which excited the most favorable comment, not merely by its composition and coloring, but by its life and spirit. The artist had arrived at that point in his career when he felt impelled to do



KENSINGTON LIONS
By Alexander Pope

something more pretentious than painting somebody's animal on order, and he prepared for the execution of this canvas in the most thorough way possible. He made a careful study of costumes, the manners of the hunt, the action of dogs—everything needful to make an accurate and spirited picture. The painting was bright with color, vigorous, decorative, and it soon was accorded a place in the Boston Tavern, where it was generally admired.

The success of this first venture in the line of creative work impelled Pope to break away more and more from the narrow field of an animal portraitist. He continued, of course, to take commissions for animal portraits, but he at the same time kept persistently

at work broadening his scope and essaying to paint pictures full of life and incident. It was while making these attempts, apparently, that the artist discovered his wonderful facility in depicting texture and in producing illusions, with the result that he rapidly turned out a number of exhibition pictures of still life which gained him the



SETTER RETRIEVING A PHEASANT
By Alexander Pope

plaudits of the public, but which were a witness rather of his cleverness with the brush than of his ability as an artist in the best sense.

Pope's ambition to become a painter of pictures had its influence on his animal portraits. He sought, and for the most part succeeded in an admirable degree, to put his subjects in a picturesque setting in keeping with the character of the animals portrayed, and calculated to take off the baldness of mere portraits. Many of his pictures, therefore, of dogs, birds, and horses, painted to appease the vanity or satisfy the love of his patrons for their favorites, have thus a dis-



WAITING FOR ORDERS
By Alexander Pope

tinct value as works of art. Combined with fine draughtsmanship and fidelity of coloring are charming bits of landscape, peeps into copses, banks of sedge, sunlit sheets of water, and the like, which suggest an ideal composition rather than a prosaic likeness.

Detailed reference to the artist's many canvases cannot here be made, but the essential qualities of a few pictures will give a suggestion of the many. His "Just from Town" may be cited as one of his simpler and withal most pleasing paintings. It depicts simply two peacocks with their gorgeous plumage showing brilliantly against a daisy-dashed meadow. The birds of fine feathers are sup-

posed by courtesy of imagination to typify the city folk who sometimes visit their country cousins and assume the airs of superiority. In this case the only visible country cousins are a couple of rabbits, half lost in the weeds and foliage, which seem surprised and somewhat abashed at the brilliant dress of the visitors in comparison with their own tawny skins. A pleasing landscape leads off into the distance, and an equally pleasing foreground of grass and flowers complete the striking composition. It is simply a pictorial depiction of a human trait in terms of animal life.

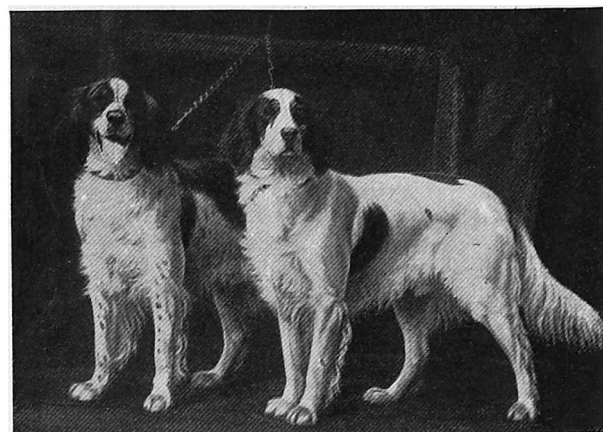
"The Truant" is another canvas, essentially different, but having a similar underlying conception. It represents two English setters, one of which, a truant to the chase, and betraying the fact in his every look, stands in a pool of water, sharply outlined against a background of bank and alder-bushes. Through the underbrush the other dog emerges, with manifest surprise at discovering his mate paddling in the water instead of attending to his proper business. The abashed, guilty look of the culprit and the alert, reproving face of the discoverer are admirably depicted. Here again the composition is studied for effect, but eminently natural and effective.

Doubtless Pope's two most notable pictures are his "Martyrdom of St. Euphemia" and his "Glaucus and the Lion." Both are dra-

matic incidents forcefully depicted, which appeal to the spectator not less from the masterful execution of the artist than from the worth of the conception embodied. Of the "Martyrdom" the accompanying illustration gives a suggestion. It is Pope's favorite among his many works. His "Glaucus," a theme taken from Bulwer's "Last Days of Pompeii," is an attempt to depict a moment of irresolution, if not of fear, on the part of a lion in the arena. Glaucus, nude but for a cincture about the loins, stands, dagger in hand, on the sand, with the serried spectators behind him as a background. The lion occupies the immediate foreground,



A WHITE SWAN
By Alexander Pope



IN LEASH
By Alexander Pope

manifestly intimidated and betraying his fear in his trembling attitude and faltering half-averted glance. The situation is dramatic in the extreme, and is pictorially told with all the force that a strong historical imagination, coupled with a sureness of the means of narration employed, could impart to the canvas.

In these more elaborate paintings, as in his minor works, the artist's knowledge of animal anatomy and characteristics is quite exceptional. This mastery of animal life, artistically speaking, is

the evidence of untiring effort. Having once determined on a specialty, Pope devoted his every energy toward acquiring that knowledge which would qualify him to paint his subjects to the life.

America has produced no better teacher of artistic anatomy than Dr. Rimmer, and Pope was an apt pupil. The fundamental grounding he received from his teacher he supplemented by individual study and constant practice. He haunted the stables, the aviaries, and the kennels, and day after day made studies of his subjects in every conceivable posture. He spent weeks in the zoölogical gardens of New York and Philadelphia, and also at Barnum's winter headquarters at Bridgeport, Connecticut, painting wild animals, and especially lions.

In undertaking to transfer his conceptions to canvas, therefore, he is in position to rely upon his own intimate knowledge; and be it said to his credit, he has never essayed to paint subjects for the details of which he would have to become a copyist.

Of Pope's "characteristic pieces" little need here be said. They are certainly marvelous in the illusions they produce. They are, however (and the artist frankly admits it), tricks of the palette rather than strong conceptions ably expressed. One of Pope's favorite pastimes is to paint firearms, birds, rabbits, and the like hanging to a slate-colored door, and cause them to stand out with a semblance to reality that deceives the sense of sight. In these feats the effect is produced partly by a skillful manipulation of shadows and partly by a faithfulness in the matter of texture that comes from careful study.

One of his last, as it is one of his most realistic, productions of this class, is the painting of a white swan hanging to a door. There is nothing to lend attractiveness to the picture save the beauty of outline and the delicacy of the white plumage. No background could be more commonplace or uninteresting. The texture of the plumage, however, is perfect, and the outline of the bird in its simplicity is faultless. There are no telltale witnesses of deception, yet at close range the average spectator would cheat himself into believing that a real bird hung before him.

It is not works of this sort, however, in which Pope prides himself. Primarily he wishes to be a faithful interpreter of animal life, and in this field, which is certainly worthy of the highest art, he has few equals.

HOWARD J. CAVE.